

Island Paradises: Travel and Utopia in Three East Asian Offshoots of *Shuihu zhuan*

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Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳 is not normally thought of as a fiction about travel. Far more noticeable, at first reading, are its rambunctiousness, its sense of structure, and its use of the spoken idiom. All three attracted the attention of Jin Shengtan 金聖歎 (d. 1661), the novel's most prominent early critic, and each has played a role in the various texts it has influenced, whether these be true sequels or, as in the case of *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢, works that drew ideas from *Shuihu* but went on to achieve full independence from it. If one were to look for Chinese works of fiction in which travel is a prominent theme, *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 or *Jinghua yuan* 鏡花緣 would much more readily spring to mind.

This is certainly not to say that travel is irrelevant to *Shuihu*. Its huge geographic compass means that characters often journey from one spot to another. Unlike other novels, which allow the narrator to change sites at will, *Shuihu*'s conventions require that "he" not leave a site unless a character leaves with him. Eventually, in later chapters, *Shuihu* devises fleet-footed messengers to cut down on all the plodding back and forth that this convention might otherwise require. But before this happens, a number of early chapters concern characters in transit and in that sense make travel an important theme. Broadly speaking, the first seventy chapters lead the outlaw (or heroes) from their respective places of origin to the lair (or utopia) at Liangshanbo 梁山泊. This site is described as isolated but attractive. The watershed comes in chapter seventy-one, when all 108 characters have been assembled and a Heaven-sent tablet announces all the key names. After this, episodes involving travel are much fewer and farther between. Yet despite all the trekking about China, *Shuihu* is not particularly interested in local custom or geography. Its interest is in the politics that drove its ambiguously righteous heroes to congregate at Liangshanbo. By many Western definitions of travel literature, *Shuihu* would not fit in the category at all.

Exilic travel, a powerful stream in classical East Asian literature is another category that hovers over, but eventually resists, application to *Shuihu zhuan*. Though Liangshanbo is attractive and a world apart, it does not resemble Tao Qian's 陶潛 "Peach Blossom Spring" (*Taohua yuan* 桃花源) in any other way. Apart from the question of whether *Shuihu*'s heroes are good or bad, the latter site was apolitical in Tao's usage, whereas Liangshanbo is characterized by a well articulated political hierarchy, resistant to "legitimate authority" though it may be. Moreover, the very plenitude of outlaws, 108 in all, and their mostly low-class background, creates an atmosphere quite at variance with

the “inscribed landscapes” that Richard Strassberg describes.¹ *Shuihu*’s focus on popular rebellion is another reason for discounting the exile theme.

Interestingly, *Shuihu*’s germ of interest in travel is developed more fully in three related narratives, one from Korea, one from China, and one from Japan. These three are Ho Kyun’s 許筠 *Hong Kiltong* 洪吉童 of the early seventeenth century, Chen Chen’s 陳忱 *Shuihu houzhuan* 水滸後傳 of 1664, and Takizawa Bakin’s 瀧澤馬琴 *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* 椿説弓張月, published in installments between 1807-11. All three feature heroes who take exception to the political atmosphere in which they live, and in all three, groups of malcontents journey overseas to an island, where they set up their own regime. The regimes they set up can be called utopias in the sense that they rectify the wrongs or eliminate the persecutions that the heroes had suffered at home. Having set up their new regimes, the heroes are no longer outlaws but become honored rulers, whether by defeating or making more peaceful types of accommodation with native peoples. All three sets of heroes maintain some kind of contact with the land from which they originated and are eventually restored to honor there, as well as abroad, because of their accomplishments overseas. The Korean novel is probably not related to the Chinese and Japanese examples, but *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* is definitely indebted to the *Houzhuan*, as well as to *Shuihu zhuan*.

Hong Kiltong

The Korean example is Ho Kyun’s *Hong Kiltong*. Ho lived from 1569 to 1618. His novel was written after the Hideyoshi invasions of 1592-97, probably during the reign of Kwanghaegun (1608-23).² The aftermath of the invasions was a period of receptivity to new ideas, to Chinese vernacular fiction, and to the type of anti-establishment thinking represented by *Shuihu zhuan*.³

The third son of one of Korea’s most successful *yangban* 兩班 families, Kyun was a younger brother of the well known woman poet Ho Nansorhon 許蘭雪軒 (1563-89). Brought up mainly by his mother after his father’s death, he was part of an idealistic current which aimed to overhaul local corruption and weak government. His interest in Chinese vernacular fiction fit this pattern and fed into the composition of *Hong Kiltong*. Kyun’s execution by dismemberment was not related to his novel but rather to his association with a clique of northerners who ran into trouble with prevailing powers. Prior to this catastrophe, his extensive literary writings had been stored at his son-in-law’s home. They included various kinds of belles lettres, especially poetry and poetry talks, written in classical Chinese. They may also have included a second novel, which does not survive. Ho Kyun was unusually erudite in the area of fiction and drama and once wrote a short critical comment on *Xiyou ji*.⁴

Hong Kiltong is easily identified as a descendant of *Shuihu*, which Ho read in the 100-chapter edition.⁵ This identification takes place, first, on the basis of details—such

¹ Richard E. Strassberg, *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

² Lee, Ki-baik, *A New History of Korea*, tr. Edward W. Wagner (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 244.

³ Kin Taijun 金台俊, *Chôsen shôsetsu shi* 朝鮮小説史, tr. An Ushoku 安宇植 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1975), pp. 89-102.

⁴ Kin, pp. 91-93, 100.

⁵ Kin, p. 91.

as the recurring motif of a young boy riding on a donkey—that recollect the parent novel. Its theme of rebellion against authority establishes a broader tie. With its episodic structure, *Hong Kiltong* can be said to have introduced the *zhanghui xiaoshuo* 章回小說 (or vernacular novel) form to Korean literature. Although there are no formal chapter divisions, the novel divides into perhaps four or five main sections. It is short, approximately thirty pages in English translation, and thus perhaps one thirtieth the size of *Shuihu zhuan*.⁶ *Hong Kiltong* was originally published in *han'gul*. A Chinese edition is said to have existed early on, if not from the beginning.⁷

The plot concerns a very talented young man, the second son of the minister of personnel during King Sejong's 世宗 (1418-50) reign. Kiltong, the eponymous protagonist, suffers from the fact that his mother was a concubine, hence he cannot call his father "father" or his brother "brother." He is also the victim of plots engineered by vicious people in his father's household who envy his exceptional talent. (The theme of talent versus birth was a major concern in Ho Kyun's own life.)⁸ Eventually Kiltong leaves home in frustration and establishes himself as the leader of a group of bandits. During a long interval as an outlaw, Kiltong and his group have some violent adventures, which they justify as attacks on corrupt officialdom and as a means of helping the poor.

Eventually, Kiltong's older brother appeals to Kiltong's sense of filial piety, and he turns himself in. In settling this matter, the brother works out a deal whereby Kiltong is appointed Minister of War but leaves Korea. With some of his men, Kiltong travels to a spot called Zhushan near Nanjing, where he overcomes monster enemies, marries, sets up his own kingdom, and proceeds to rule. After a while, he moves his kingdom to a more appealing area, the nearby island kingdom named Lüdao, which he first conquers and then rules sagaciously. In none of his various conquests does he encounter much resistance, nor is the issue of Koreans versus Chinese actively engaged. One of the key precepts of his rule is eliminating distinctions between the children of concubines and those of legitimate wives. When Kiltong's father dies, he is transported to Lüdao and buried in a mausoleum built by Hong Kiltong. Kiltong's stepmother is also buried there. Eventually his mother arrives, as well, and when she dies, she is buried next to her husband. Kiltong has five children, three sons and two daughters, by two wives.

Lüdao is distinguished by its beauty and its suitability as a place to live. We also know that it is located somewhat near Nanjing. Several of the places that are mentioned as Kiltong first makes his way there can also be located in Jiangsu province, not far from Nanjing. Yet Lüdao itself appears to be a fantasy location. The novel is very vague about the distances and spatial relationships between the places it describes.

In arranging his kingdom and keeping contact with his family in Korea, Kiltong makes several round trips from Lüdao. Another round trip is undertaken by his brother, yet another by a Chinese emissary, the father of one of his wives. None of these travels are described in detail. Indeed, the lack of description gives the impression that travel between Korea and China was an easy matter, an impression quite discordant with the

⁶ "The Tale of Hong Kiltong," tr. Marshall R. Pihl, in *Anthology of Korean Literature: From Early Times to the Nineteenth Century*, comp. and ed. Peter H. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), pp. 119-47.

⁷ Kin, p. 75.

⁸ Pihl, p. 119.

realities of the time.⁹ In a rather crude narrative move, Ho Kyun deposits the main body of Kiltong's men on ten boats in the West River and has them wait there through several episodes before Kiltong returns and leads them to Lüdao. This is the only time that a means of travel is clearly indicated, so vague are the descriptions of travel the rest of the time. We must therefore assume that travel *per se* was not central to Ho Kyun's interests and that his main emphasis was on rhetorical concerns.

As with details about travel, details about cultural differences are minimized in the story of *Hong Kiltong*. We know that Kiltong meets and marries his first wife after slaying demons near Mang and Tang Mountains (these are real locations), but no attention is paid to such questions as what language Kiltong and his Chinese wife might have communicated in or what other cultural differences might have obtained. Again, we can safely conclude that Ho Kyun's main emphasis was on his moral agenda, not on the realities of life for Koreans in a foreign land.

Generally speaking, *Hong Kiltong* is rather short and sketchy, and it is not given to long elaborations, particularly about life abroad. Neither is Ho interested in establishing plausibility of other kinds. The opening episode features Hong's father, who dreams of a dragon but cannot persuade his first wife to sleep with him, thus prompting him to seek companionship with a maid. It is the maid that gives birth to Kiltong. This seminal, and potentially rather amusing, moment is over and done with in a few lines. Ho is also not interested in structural niceties. Not only does he create logistical awkwardnesses, such as the long wait on the West River, mentioned above, but he is far less given to the kind of foreshadowing, dovetailing, character contrasts, and leitmotifs that would become a fixture of novel writing in seventeenth-century China in the wake of Jin Shengtan's criticism of *Shuihu zhuan* (1641).

One final feature should be mentioned: the absence of allusion. *Hong Kiltong* is a book that would have worked well for readers who had not read widely in elite literature. Although it draws on such sources as *Shuihu*, *Xiyou ji*, *Jiandeng xinhua* 剪燈新話, and other fictions, it does not advertise these indebtednesses.¹⁰ Designed for a popular readership, it requires no special erudition to grasp in full.

Shuihu houzhuan

Published in 1664, Chen Chen's *Shuihu houzhuan* is our second story of travel from abuse and alienation to a better world. Like *Hong Kiltong*, *Shuihu houzhuan* uses the *Shuihu* theme to advance a political agenda, this time one of sympathy for the disempowered and of covert support for the Ming loyalist cause.

Chen Chen was probably born in 1614. He spent most of his life in his home town of Nanxun, Jiangsu, near the south shore of Lake Tai. As a young man he took an extensive tour of south China, and he frequented such cities as Hangzhou, Nanjing, and Yangzhou in his later years. A Ming loyalist, he maintained longstanding friendships with a number of writers who shared his views. His last known writing is dated 1666. His date of death is not known. Other biographical milestones include Chen's membership in two poetry societies. The first, the Jingyin shishe 驚隱詩社, was made up of loyalists to the Ming Dynasty, which had collapsed in 1644. Some of Chen's fellow society members were quite famous, especially the historian, philosopher, and

⁹ On the difficulty of travel between China and Korea in the fifteenth century, see Choe Pu, *A Record of Drifting Across the Sea*, tr. John Meskill (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965).

¹⁰ On these indebtednesses, see Kin, p. 101.

philologist Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-82). Between 1650 and about 1664, the Society's main period of activity, it became increasingly difficult to oppose the Qing directly, but this society appears to have stated its message quietly and innocuously. Rather, the focus was on poetry, wine, and nature appreciation. Chen's surviving poems, many written for society members, bear witness to his talent as a nature poet. A second poetry society to which he belonged, the Dongchi shishe 東池詩社, had much the same orientation. It existed between 1660 and 1662.

Chen appears not to have passed any examinations, and he supported himself as a fortune teller after the fall of the Ming. Yet his life was highly literary. He was known for his wide reading, both in classics and in unofficial histories and popular literature. In addition to *Shuihu houzhuan*, Chen wrote two other works of popular literature, a play and a *tanci* 彈詞 (long prosimetric narrative), neither of which survive.¹¹

Chen's poems hint at his strong identification with Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功, 1624-62), the Ming loyalist soldier who undertook to recapture Nanjing for the Ming in 1659. Koxinga was driven back and eventually settled on Taiwan. A similar dynamic undergirds the plot of *Shuihu houzhuan*, whose verbal point of departure is a line in chapter 119 of *Shuihu* about one of the few heroes to survive the government crackdown against the band of heroes or outlaws around which the text revolves. This line reports that Li Jun 李俊 became King of Siam. It appears that Chen wrote his *Shuihu* sequel as a way of expressing—and at the same time disguising—his support for Zheng Chenggong. One gleans this mainly from the fact that the “Siam” of which he writes is an island (or rather, a main island surrounded by little islands), as well as from the fact that Li Jun and company leave China out of disgust at the way the rulers of the Song Dynasty give in to barbarian invaders. As emphasized in the novel, this weakness eventually leads to the surrender of north China to the alien Jin Dynasty. Translating to Chen's present day, one finds in this a Ming loyalist version of how China was lost to the Qing.

The *Houzhuan* claims to have been written by a man who calls himself Song Yimin 宋遺民 (“Song loyalist”) and to have been discovered centuries later by Yandang shanqiao 雁蕩山樵. Yandang shanqiao, or “woodcutter of Yandang mountain,” was Chen's regular pen name, but the preface is dated 1608, when Chen was not yet born. Internal evidence leaves no doubt that the *Houzhuan* was written in the early 1660s, just before its publication.¹²

The *Houzhuan* spends about three-quarters of its time in China and one quarter in Siam. This is very similar to the proportions between the Korea and China segments in *Hong Kiltong*. The two works are also similar logistically, in that a vanguard arrives in “utopia” early in the book, followed later by the remaining members of the outlaw band. But in the *Houzhuan*'s case, these movements are much more complexly orchestrated. A work in forty chapters, the *Houzhuan* spends the first ten of these detailing China's weaknesses; then, in chapters eleven and twelve, sends Li Jun and a small group of heroes to Jin'ao 金鰲, an island just outside Siam. The journey there is well described. We hear nothing more of this vanguard between chapters twelve and thirty. Rather, attention focuses on two other groups of *Shuihu* remnants who are slowly gathering in China under persecution by the Southern Song Dynasty because of their status as

¹¹ A more detailed version of this biography can be found in my *The Margins of Utopia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 13-49.

¹² See the discussion of the Korean king, Yi U 李倨, below.

members of the *Shuihu* band. Finally, in chapter thirty, these two groups, now combined, set sail for Siam. Thanks to Heaven-sent signals and other indications, they have no trouble finding where their comrades are.

Once this group arrives on Jin'ao, they make plans to take over the large island, Siam, which is occupied by a combination of weak and evil people. The conquest is prolonged, but eventually successful. Still later, Li Jun and his cohort make the rounds of the outlying islands, which they conquer one by one. In contrast to *Hong Kiltong*, the *Houzhuan* is much more specific about who accompanied Li Jun in his initial foray to Siamese territory and who comprised the rest of the outlaw band. Also, the takeover of Siam is more difficult and antagonistic than the seizure of Lüdao in *Hong Kiltong*. It involves outsmarting evil geniuses and establishing legitimacy by allying with the good but hapless Siamese king.

As was the case in *Hong Kiltong*, the *Houzhuan*'s utopia is a corrective to the evils perceived at home. Just as Hong Kiltong rules in exemplary fashion, making no distinction between sons of wives and sons of concubines, so the general air of probity and forcefulness in Siam contrasts with weakness and venality at home. One might expect Li Jun's kingdom to be anti-foreign, given its criticism of weak Song responses to barbarians in the China chapters, but, in fact, it is quite hospitable to Yi U 李侯, the king of Korea, who eventually settles in Siam. (The name Yi U is based on that of a real Korean prince who traveled to China as part of a tribute mission in 1663.)¹³ The other foreign characters in the novel are villains, for the most part, except for the weak Siamese king, who turns out to be of Chinese descent. Yet the *Houzhuan* is clearly much more international in its focus than *Hong Kiltong*, with characters from India, Champa, Mongolia, and Japan, as well as Korea, China, and Siam. Moreover, several chapters of the novel take place on the open seas.

Siam's ties to the Chinese mainland are roughly analogous to Lüdao's ties with Korea in *Hong Kiltong*. After all of Siam has been conquered, the first emperor of the Southern Song, Gaozong 高宗, pays a visit, having been shipwrecked near its shores (chapter 36). After delivering a lecture on the evils of accommodation to barbarian demands, the heroes send him back to China and remain on good terms with him ever after. Like the Korean king Yi U's visit to Siam and his eventual decision to retire there, Gaozong's relationship with the former outlaws helps to legitimize Li Jun's regime, which adopts Chinese reign names. Following this episode, several of the heroes return to China, where they report back to other *Shuihu* remnants, such as the once redoubtable Wu Song, who gives them his blessing but is now too old to make the journey to Siam. When they return to Siam, having collected Chinese brides for the other heroes, they bring along an official of high rank and install Li Jun as Siam's king.

Logistics and rhetoric work hand in hand in the *Houzhuan*, through Chen's involvement in the style of literary criticism fostered by Jin Shengtan. The preface of 1664, no doubt by Chen himself, takes specific exception to Jin's edition of *Shuihu*, which viewed the heroes as outlaws and saw to their precipitous demise. Yet as Chen's commentary to his own novel makes clear, he is clearly influenced by the kind of manipulations to which Jin's style of criticism responded. Thus, he points out leitmotifs, character contrasts, and obvious parallelisms that *Hong Kiltong* does not have. Of

¹³ Yi's given name U 侯 was written with a rare character, so as not to add to the number of taboo characters that would otherwise be subtracted from common usage. This was common practice with Korean princes. I am indebted to Edward Wagner for this information.

interest among these manipulations are foreshadowings and prophetic poems indicating long in advance that both Li Jun and his cohort will settle on Siam. In contrast, Kiltong's greatness is foretold by a physiognomer, but only in vague terms, and the fact that foreign travel lies ahead comes as a complete surprise. In the *Houzhuan*, the tablets that descend from Heaven to foretell the heroes' future have a logistical function, but their Heavenly origin also dispels any doubt that these heroes are good men, however much the Chinese government may attack them. A second holdover of Jin's way of thinking is Heaven's early announcement about which individuals will be gathered and the confirmation that the gathering process is complete once the heroes come together in Siam.

Three other differences between the two works fill out the discussion of their logistical and their moral sides. Both relate, as well, to the ways each work borrows or rejects ideas from *Shuihu zhuan*. First, *Shuihu*'s inhibition against leaping from one locale to another continues much more explicitly in the *Houzhuan* than in *Hong Kiltong*. *Shuihu*'s magic messenger Dai Zong 戴宗, who could cross large distances in short amounts of time, is directly inherited by the *Houzhuan*, who uses him for exactly the same purpose as in the parent novel—to cut down on tedious trekking across China. In *Hong Kiltong*, too, the narrator never simply changes scene. When Kiltong, then in Lüdao, discovers that his father is dying in Korea, it is through the intercession of a medium, not by a direct switch to the Korean scene. In addition, the various comings and goings between the two countries help to keep *Hong Kiltong*'s two theaters before the reader's eye. In general, however, because *Hong Kiltong* is much less interested in the process and adventure of travel, these voyages take up very little time, and their logistical function does not stand out as it does in the *Houzhuan*.

A second difference concerns the behavior of the heroes when they are in their home country. Hong Kiltong and company make convincing outlaws during much of the novel. Even though they rob from the rich and give to the poor, and in that sense could be called righteous, their thefts involve deception; and Kiltong commits several vicious murders against people that admittedly wanted him out of the way. This moral ambiguity is highly reminiscent of *Shuihu zhuan*. Only after the characters reach Lüdao do they behave in an irreproachable way. By contrast, the *Houzhuan*'s characters, even while in China, behave themselves in exemplary fashion. Most are consistently shown to be modest, humble, filial, and considerate, in contrast to their enemies, whose behavior is generally despicable. This sometimes means that a holdover from *Shuihu* will have improved his previous behavior or appearance. A case in point is Li Jun, the lead character, who becomes noticeably plumper and less swarthy in the *Houzhuan* than he had been before.¹⁴ Thanks to these changes, the transition to Siam can be shown as an escape from unwarranted discrimination or from prejudice against righteous men of the lower classes; and the heroes' good behavior once they reach Siam is consistent with the way they have been behaving all along. Their sudden interest in marriage once they have conquered Siam is another sign of the greater respectability of these characters, as compared to what went on in *Shuihu*. For some characters the transition away from *Shuihu*'s misogyny is difficult, but in the end it is accomplished smoothly and decisively for the band of heroes as a whole.

A third important difference is seen in the *Houzhuan*'s far greater interest in travel. Ho Kyun and Chen Chen were fully conversant with elite literature, but it is only Chen who works anything resembling classical travel description into his fiction. In this,

¹⁴ A point on which a character remarks in chapter 11. See *Margins of Utopia*, pp. 138-39

he far surpasses *Shuihu*, as well, whose many descriptions of movements from one point to another may take note of the natural setting, but usually only in set pieces. In contrast, Chen rather often stops the action for a moment of literary virtuosity, as in his description of a sunrise at Mount Tai in chapter 14 and his evocation of a beautiful natural setting, after the manner of the "Peach Blossom Spring," in chapter 22.¹⁵ In so doing, he reaches above the heads of his characters, who are less capable than either author or narrator of appreciating such moments. Less reliant on classical traditions are the many descriptions of adventures outside China, such as the pilgrimage to Putuoshan 普陀山, the encounters with Japanese pirates and exploitative traders from Champa, and the battle with a whale. Even after the heroes reach Siam, the habit of describing the world continues, especially after the conquest which establishes Li Jun and his men on the throne. Here Siam's imagined customs and geography are described. As in the China sections, these descriptive passages are integrated into the narrative stream, not separated out as set pieces. They are generally far less intense and more whimsical than the passages describing China or those describing the various voyages between China and Siam; yet they are amusing in their observations about outlandish local curiosities, as well as in their evocation of the natural world.

Chen appears to have been especially adept at describing places to which he himself has been, but he must have had some knowledge of life at sea, and his descriptions of ocean voyages and of life in Siam add color to the novel as a whole. Compared to *Hong Kiltong*, moreover, *Shuihu houzhuan* is a far more visually oriented novel, going out of its way to conjure up a vista for every place the heroes go. Perhaps it is only because of Chen's vivid imagination and his skill in natural description that his prose works perfectly well without illustrations. The *Houzhuan* did acquire illustrations in a second edition dating from 1770, but these are only portraits of individuals, with no landscape or other visual information.

Various facts about the *Houzhuan* suggest that it may have been aimed at more than one level of reader. Its occasional bursts of allusiveness (for example, during the description Hangzhou in chapter 36), as well as its well-crafted natural descriptions, reveal Chen's identification with Chinese high culture; yet the plot is adventurous enough to appeal to a less well educated stratum. This contrasts with *Hong Kiltong*, which shows no signs of elite appeal.

The many points of similarity between *Hong Kiltong* and the *Houzhuan* allow us to pose the tantalizing question of whether Chen might have been aware of, and hence influenced by, *Hong Kiltong*. The possibility is remote, at best, and it depends on there having been a Chinese edition in China by Chen's time. We do know that Ho Kyun introduced his sister's writings to a Chinese ambassador, Zhu Zhifan 朱之蕃, who transported them to China and published them in 1608.¹⁶ Might Ho have used a similar means of transmitting *Hong Kiltong* to Chinese readers? There is no way either to affirm this possibility or to dismiss it out of hand.

Apart from rough similarities in the plots, there are other reasons for inferring influence, among them the two-step method through which the heroes arrive at their

¹⁵ *Margins of Utopia*, pp. 158-59.

¹⁶ Hu Wenkai 胡文楷, *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao* 历代妇女著作考 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), p. 166. See also Zhu's introduction and Ho's postface to a collection of Nansorhon's poetry, *Lanxuexuan* [Nansorhon] shi 蘭雪軒詩, that is held in the Harvard-Yenching Library.

utopia. The *Houzhuan*'s heroes' transitional government on Jin'ao before their exodus to the main island of Siam is roughly equivalent to Hong Kiltong's rather long stay on Zhushan before moving to Lüdao. Another similarity is the fight between men and ghosts in the *Houzhuan*'s chapter 34. This fight unearths a beautiful girl. The girl, a Siamese, is eventually married to the least eligible among the heroes. In *Hong Kiltong*, by contrast, a fight against ghosts produces a beautiful woman, who becomes one of Kiltong's two wives. Marriage itself once the heroes reach utopia is another link between the two. A third possible clue is the *Houzhuan*'s Korean King Yi U's decision to retire from office and move to Siam. This episode could have drawn from *Hong Kiltong*'s focus on Kiltong's father, the minister, who is eventually buried in his son's domain.

Even added together these clues do not make a strong case for influence, but they are at least suggestive. The other possibility, that the two works should have proceeded independently to construct such similar plots, is in some ways even more interesting. Latent in *Shuihu*, it would suggest, lies a propensity toward utopianism in a foreign setting, a propensity that bore similar fruit in two different cultures at two different times. Perhaps this propensity might be regarded as the vernacular equivalent of the classical narrative, "Peach Blossom Spring."

Chinsetsu yumiharizuki

Chinsetsu yumiharizuki (sometimes called *Crescent Moon* in English) was the first major historical novel (*yomihon* 讀本) of Takizawa Bakin and one of the earliest examples of the genre. In sixty-eight chapters, it is significantly longer than the *Houzhuan*. Unlike either Ho Kyun or Chen Chen, Bakin was a professional writer; like Ho Kyun, he is credited with adapting the vernacular Chinese novel to local taste. *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* is demonstrably based on *Shuihu houzhuan*, among other sources.

Bakin was born in 1767 and died in 1848. A descendant of samurai, his family was not well off, and he was forced to fend for himself financially. Bakin rode the wave of interest in illustrated fiction that developed over the course of the Edo period. After a stint as ghostwriter for the more famous Santô Kyôden 山東京傳 (1761-1816), he began to realize his talent for writing fiction. The historical novels that were to become his specialty emerged in the wake of a ban of 1790 on love stories of the "gay quarters." Their historical subject matter and Confucian morals steered them clear of censorship; whereas their intricate construction, imaginative plots, and sophisticated illustrations appealed to a large audience of readers. This audience included women and children, as well as Bakin's fellow samurai.¹⁷

Bakin was a resident of Edo (later, Tokyo), but in both 1800 and 1802, he undertook long journeys on foot around Japan. The scenery and local customs observed on these journeys were recaptured in his travel diaries, but they also bore fruit in the rich descriptions of travel in his various novels. Throughout his life, Bakin was interested in travel, including foreign travel, though he never went abroad.¹⁸ Another lasting consequence of his early journeys was the discovery of Chinese fiction, the study of which was more advanced in Kyoto, Ôsaka, and Nagoya than in Edo. Bakin's acquaintance with *Shuihu houzhuan* began in Nagoya in 1802, and this novel continued

¹⁷ On women and children, see note 21, below. On samurai, see Leon M. Zolbrod, *Takizawa Bakin* (New York: Twayne, 1967), pp. 61-4.

¹⁸ Zolbrod, p. 81.

to occupy his attention over the following three decades.¹⁹ Bakin's best known works were *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* and *Nansô Satomi Hakkenden* 南總里見八犬傳 which was published between 1814 and 1842. Both works were heavily influenced by Chinese vernacular fiction, as well as by Japanese historical romances and history books. Indeed, most of Bakin's voluminous fictional output (280 works of fiction, according to his tomb inscription)²⁰ had some kind of Chinese influence. Bakin's long novels, in particular, can be said to rework the long masterworks of Chinese fiction (*Shuihu* especially) in Japanese form.²¹

By the 1840s, Bakin had lost his eyesight, and the final chapters of *Hakkenden* had to be dictated to his daughter-in-law. His death in 1848 was from natural causes. In addition to fiction, Bakin is known for many other types of writing, especially literary criticism. His *Hankansôtan* 半閑窗談 of 1831 is a critical interpretation of *Shuihu houzhuan*.²² A study of Edo authors, which came out in 1834, is probably his most important work of criticism.²³

Chinsetsu yumiharizuki in sixty-eight chapters is the saga of Minamoto Tametomo 源為朝, a legendary archer during the Hôgen 保元 (1156) and Heiji (1159-60) wars. As a child of impoverished samurai, Bakin appears to have identified with his hero's loss of all hereditary privileges during these two wars. Guided by prescient birds and animals, but hounded by relentless enemies, Tametomo stops for a while in Izu, Kyûshû, and other southern climes, eventually ending up in the Ryûkyûs. There he restores order to an embattled kingdom, whose rule he is offered by appreciative local leaders. Finally, he commits righteous suicide and effervesces up to Heaven in his old age.

The Ryûkyûan parts of this novel owe a considerable debt to *Shuihu houzhuan*. Bakin does not list the *Houzhuan* among his sources, nor does he mention it in his various commentaries and prefaces. Rather than adducing proof of the *Houzhuan*'s influence in this essay, I shall simply reiterate Bakin's long interest in this Chinese work and save detailed proof for another occasion.²⁴

Tangible evidence of the *Houzhuan*'s influence is located in two main ways. The first is in *Yumiharizuki*'s moral structure. *Kanzen chôaku* 勸善懲惡 (or rewarding the good and punishing the bad) would seem to be a general feature of Bakin's writing, but his essay of 1831 on the *Houzhuan* establishes that some of his thoughts on this important principle took shape around the relationship between *Shuihu* and *Shuihu houzhuan*.

¹⁹ Zolbrod, p. 50.

²⁰ Zolbrod, p. 132.

²¹ For a general overview of these connections, see Asô Isoji 麻生磯次, *Edo bungaku to Chûgoku bungaku* 江戸文学と中国文学 (Tokyo: Sanseidô, 1955). Bakin's introduction to the first part of *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* explains that he is writing a "Chinese *engi shôsetsu* 演義小説 (C. *yanyi xiaoshuo*)" version of the Tametomo story, one more suitable for women and children than what is found in the *Hôgen monogatari* 保元物語. See *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki*, ed. Gotô Tanji 後藤丹治 (Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1978), p. I, 73.

²² *Hankansôtan* is reprinted in *Kokubungaku kenkyû* 国文学研究 27 (Spring, 1952), pp. 99-154.

²³ Zolbrod, pp. 86-7.

²⁴ The person who first proposed a link between *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* and the *Houzhuan* was Tawarada Gakukai 依田学海. See Gotô's introduction to *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki*, p. 10. My unpublished essay "Chinsetsu yumiharizuki in Sino-Japanese Perspective" discusses how certain differences between the *Houzhuan* and *Yumiharizuki* can be explained by Bakin's objections to the way the *Houzhuan* was put together. I mean to publish this essay some day.

Thus, he criticizes *Shuihu* for trying to promote some of its more rambunctious characters as heroes, but he also strongly rejects Jin Shengtan's solution of executing all of the heroes (if only in a dream) at *Shuihu*'s end.²⁵

In honoring only good characters and dishonoring the evil, Bakin maintains, the *Houzhuan* makes sense of *Shuihu*'s moral disorder. On at least two occasions, he proposes that readers think of *Shuihu* and the *Houzhuan* as a single work, altogether 160 chapters long (120 for *Shuihu*, 40 for the *Houzhuan*).²⁶ The formula "beginning good, middle bad, end loyal" (*shozen chûaku gochû* 初善中惡後忠) is another way in which he characterizes the moral relationship between the two.²⁷ Bakin realizes that a morally consistent world was at considerable variance with reality (in actuality, *Yumiharizuki*'s hero Tametomo committed suicide without ever leaving Japan; in *Yumiharizuki* he is merely shown to be somewhat unstable during the Japan-based part of the story). Yet, because of the censorship laws under which he operated, and because he expected to have women and children among his readers, he felt a responsibility to make moral consistency a cornerstone of his novels.²⁸ This idea certainly drew on sources other than the *Houzhuan*, but the *Houzhuan* offered a good example of, and probably helped him formulate, this larger goal. Despite its mixed audience and its allusions to earlier histories, then, *Yumiharizuki* is meant to be uplifting for its least well educated readers. Bakin's concern for this readership is also seen in his notes, that crop up during his text's more allusive moments.

The second sign of the *Houzhuan*'s influence is in Tametomo's long period of residency in the Ryûkyûs, which is heralded in chapter 6, begins in earnest in chapter 32, and continues until the end of the novel (chapter 68). In terms of proportions, this section occupies over half of the action. Besides the *Houzhuan*, *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* has many other influences, among them Japanese and Ryûkyûan legend and contemporary travelogues by Chinese and Japanese.²⁹ And because the *Houzhuan*'s foreign section is situated in "Siam," rather than the Ryûkyûs, the points of detailed influence are few.³⁰ Moreover, Tametomo's troubles are rather different from those of Li Jun and company. They are the product of the Hôgen insurrection and Heiji Uprising, which ousted his Minamoto clan from power and thrust the Taira 平 into temporary political control. Yet

²⁵ *Hankansôtan*, p. 108. Although *Hankansôtan* was written over twenty years after *Yumiharizuki*, it contains important evidence of how to link Bakin's novel with the *Houzhuan*.

²⁶ Shiroaki Naoya 白木直也, "Takizawa Bakin *Suiko gaden* 'kôtei genpon' choroku no kanpon nishu" 瀧澤馬琴水滸畫傳《校定原本》著録刊本二種, *Tôhōgaku* 東方學 47 (1974), p. 91. Shiroaki makes the point based on a line from Bakin's *Suiko gaden* of 1805. Bakin's own annotated copy of the *Houzhuan*, held in the Tenri Library, could also be used to support this argument. It again refers to *Shuihu* as a 160-chapter novel, to which Chen's forty chapters are a fitting end.

²⁷ *Hankansôtan*, p. 108.

²⁸ On censorship, see Zolbrod, p. 25. On women and children readers, see note 21, above.

²⁹ For example, Terajima Ryôan 寺島良安, *Wa-Kan sansai zue* 和漢三才圖繪 (1715), on which see the map reproduced in Gotô, ed., *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki*, p. I, 123. See also the map from Xu Baoguang 徐葆光, *Zhongshan quanxin lu* 中山傳信錄 (1721), reproduced in Tokuda Takeshi 徳田武, "Chinsetsu yumiharizuki to sakuhin kanshō" 椿説弓張月と作品鑑賞, in *Kyokutei Bakin, Nihon no koten* 曲亭馬琴、日本の古典 19 (Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1980), p. 113.

³⁰ Yet parts of Taiwan, such as the Pescadores, were only a few days' sail from the Ryûkyûs by Bakin's time. See the map reproduced in Gotô Tanji's edition of the novel, p. I, 123, for example.

the idea of resolving Tametomo's political difficulties by taking him to a foreign land was directly inspired by Chen Chen's resolution of *Shuihu houzhuan*.

One way of demonstrating this is by pointing out the means by which the Ryûkyûan episode is integrated into the rest of the story. Tametomo's early voyage there in chapter six is clearly guided by supernatural forces. It is then that he meets his future wife before returning to Japan. Only much later do he and his supporters reach the Ryûkyûs and decide to stay. This arrangement, and its accompanying predictive devices, are roughly parallel to the stages through which Chen leads his vanguard to Siam early in the novel then returns the action to China, before concluding with ten chapters in Siam. That this segmented approach has antecedents in Jin Shengtan's method of understanding *Shuihu* does not detract from the fact that neither Chen nor Bakin thought well of Jin Shengtan.

Despite Bakin's considerable, albeit hidden, debt to Chen, there are important differences in the way each author handles the details of their respective fictional journeys. This can be seen even in the domestic travel within the two novels, yet it is especially visible in the depictions of life abroad. As discussed in conjunction with the *Houzhuan*, Chen Chen is not uninterested in his characters' experiences as travelers, and in juxtaposition with *Hong Kiltong* his novel appears to be quite caught up in the passing scene. Yet Chen's description of scenery is uneven. A trip to Huguang that one of the characters makes in chapter sixteen is glossed over very quickly, perhaps because Chen had never been there. By contrast, the description of the Lake Tai region in chapter nine is much fuller. Being from Nanxun, Chen would have known this area well.

Bakin's approach to domestic travel is more attentive and consistent than Chen's. His own experiences as a traveler are thought to lie behind his ongoing focus on natural scenery, and the historical allusions it conjures up, within Japan.³¹ According to Tokuda Takeshi, Japanese readers were generally hungry for more detail than their Chinese counterparts, not only when it came to travel.³² This may be another reason for Bakin's fuller approach to scenery and his greater interest in the pains and pleasures of getting from here to there. Yet despite their differences, Chen and Bakin are alike in their understanding of travel *per se* as a major point of interest for readers. In this both contrast significantly with Ho Kyun.

The differences between Chen and Bakin become especially interesting when one considers the landscapes of alien lands. Since neither author had visited his "utopia," each had to decide how authentic to make it seem to readers and how to deal with the fascinations and frustrations of life abroad. Not surprisingly, the level of attention to scenery that obtain in the homeland parts of the two narratives continues in the parts that are overseas. Thus, Bakin's Ryûkyûs are much more fully realized than Chen's Siam. But the differences between Siam and the Ryûkyûs lie not simply in the level of intensity with which they are described. In the *Houzhuan*, Siam functions as a "clean land," or utopian dream. Because it is meant, most likely, as a metaphor for Taiwan, the author makes no effort to tantalize his readers with a mimetically described foreign landscape. Though he does fill in details about Siam and its surrounding islands these descriptions are short and whimsical, which is to say they do not make a serious effort to convince the

³¹ Zolbrod, p. 36.

³² "Yomihon to Chûgoku bakuwa shôsetsu" 読本と中国白話小説, in *Edo bungaku to Chûgoku* 江戸文学と中国, eds. Suwa Haruo 諏訪春雄 and Hino Tatsuo 日野龍夫 (Tokyo, Senjinsha, 1987), p. 87.

reader with descriptions of a “real,” if exotic, land. Instead, readers are advised that certain features of Siamese life, such as local products, are exactly like those in China.³³ The emphasis is as much on sameness as on difference, despite assertions that Siam lies outside China. This undercuts the half-hearted attempt at exoticism and enhances the impression that an allegory is underway.

Bakin takes a different approach in his description of the Ryûkyûs. Only at the very end of the novel does Tametomo prevail against local enemies and set up his good, Confucian regime. Before then, struggle after struggle takes place against Mô Un 朦雲, a Ryûkyûan evil demon. Bakin does his best throughout these chapters to create the illusion of reality. Having assiduously studied travelogues, he is able to inform the reader about Ryûkyûan landscape, plants, and language.³⁴ Up to a point, at least, his is a factually accurate foreign world. In *Hankansôtan*, Bakin faults the *Houzhuan* for “ridiculous” pieces of misinformation, concerning such things as the distance between China and Siam, the contents of a whale’s stomach, and the thickness of clothing worn by soldiers in hot climates.³⁵ Yet the difference between the two authors is less a matter of factual accuracy and more a matter of the extent to which they strive for mimetic appeal. In fact Bakin, too, creates “unrealistic” figures, such as his various monsters and strange animals, among them a tiger-cow that is based on an animal from Chen’s chapter 31. But Bakin’s emphasis is on engulfing the reader, whereas Chen—at least in the Siam chapters—asks his audience not to get overly involved in the story *per se* and to concentrate instead on what it means.

Bakin’s *Hankansôtan* further explains that Chinese authors and readers do not much care for foreigners.³⁶ Other than the *Houzhuan*’s sympathetically portrayed Koreans, it is indeed the case that no foreigner in the book is presented positively. Even the good if weak Siamese characters are specifically said to have descended from Chinese. By contrast, it is clear that Bakin wants his readers to take an interest in things foreign, to delight in the adventure of travel abroad. This difference in attitude can also be seen when it comes to intercultural marriage. In the *Houzhuan*, one respected character marries a Siamese princess, but she is ultimately Chinese in origin. Except for the lowliest of the Chinese men, who marries a Siamese girl, all of the other Chinese characters marry Chinese women who are imported from China. In *Yumiharizuki*, on the other hand, Tametomo’s wives include a Ryûkyûan princess, albeit one inhabited by the spirit of a woman he had known in Japan. Here Bakin goes one step farther than Chen toward blending his heroes’ blood with that of the people they go on to rule. In the end, Tametomo is credited with fathering a line of Ryûkyûan kings. Paternity is also used to restore Tametomo’s dignity back in Japan, for one of his other offspring is credited with fathering the first leader of the Ashikaga shogunate.

Chinsetsu yumiharizuki’s extravagant illustrations have been a subject of study in their own right.³⁷ More pertinent to our purposes here, though, is their important contribution to the immersion effect that Bakin seeks to create for his readers. Even

³³ *Margins of Utopia*, pp. 63-4, 164.

³⁴ See for example Bakin’s comments on the potato, recently imported into the Ryûkyûs, in chapter 3. On language, see his note on the Ryûkyûan songs in chapter 32.

³⁵ *Hankansôtan*, p. 137.

³⁶ *Hankansôtan*, p. 142.

³⁷ Suzuki Jôzô 鈴木重三, “Yomihon no sashie” 読本の挿絵, in *Kyokutei Bakin, Nihon no koten*, pp. 152-53.

when they depict a magical animal or a terrifyingly evil human, they absorb the reader in the experience of reading, rather than asking him to look at the ironies behind the scene.

Apart from these differences, many important contrasts between the *Houzhuan* and *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* can be made. These include the far greater interest in heroic women in the latter and its very different attitudes toward social class. Bakin's expectation that his audience would include women readers helps account for *Yumiharizuki*'s sustained attention to female characters. In contrast, respectable women enter the *Houzhuan* only as an afterthought, in the marriage scenes of the concluding chapters. As for class, Bakin is quite intolerant of the prestige Chen grants to one of his leading characters, Yan Qing 燕青, a man of the people and the chief strategist in the novel.³⁸ One might argue that Chen's interest in Yan is quite consistent with his rhetorical endorsement of the common man. Yet in Japan, such support for a commoner could have been viewed as rambunctious and might have gotten the book as a whole in trouble. Since Bakin's novel was designed as best-selling fantasy, not as satirical or provocative, it made sense for him to eradicate all such "lapses" in his adaptation for Japanese audiences. Besides, Bakin's pride in his own samurai ancestry left him closely identified with traditional feudal values.

Either of these topics could be developed more extensively, but they lie outside of the issues of travel and utopia, which are this essay's main concern. They are merely meant to show that the differences between *Yumiharizuki* and the *Houzhuan* transcend these central themes.

In at least one way, *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* is closer to *Hong Kiltong* than to *Shuihu houzhuan*. This is its focus on a single hero, rather than on a troop of leading characters. There is, however, no evidence that Bakin knew of *Hong Kiltong*.

Conclusion

Hong Kiltong, *Shuihu houzhuan*, and *Chinsetsu yumiharizuki* share common descent from *Shuihu*, and the congruencies in the way they describe travel and utopia are not completely coincidental. Whether one explains them in terms of direct literary influence or more indirectly, the result is three remarkably similar fantasies linking political persecution at home with ocean travel and a better world abroad.

In explaining the differences between these three works, one must make reference both to the different purposes of the authors and to audience demands. Variations between nations also make a difference, and interest in travel and in things foreign may well have been increasing across East Asia between Ho Kyun's and Bakin's time. The point of this essay is not to exhaust this subject but rather to introduce a set of novels in which travel and utopia played important roles. As this evidence clearly demonstrates, elite literature is not the only locus of travel literature in East Asia. Vernacular fiction, too, offers a rich field for exploring the topic and—at least in these three examples—presents its own distinct inflections of the travel/utopia theme.

³⁸ *Hankansôtan*, p. 122.